



August 31, 2005

Dear Iowa Educators,

The members of the State Board of Education are proud to endorse "Improving Rigor and Relevance in the High School Curriculum." In supporting this important document, we reaffirm our commitment to raising expectations for all our high school students. We believe that each and every one of our students has a right to the very best educational opportunities including rigor and relevance in ALL high school courses.

This document was developed in response to requests from local educators and school board members seeking clarification of the concepts of "rigor" and "relevance." Judy Jeffrey, Director of the Iowa Department of Education, was accompanied by members of the State Board of Education in an ambitious schedule of visits with virtually every Iowa superintendent, high school principal and school board president during the spring of 2005. In these visits, Director Jeffrey and State Board members repeatedly heard requests from local district educators and board members to define "rigor" and "relevance" in very specific terms. We believe that this document provides a discussion starter for local boards and educators to more completely define what rigor and relevance means in their own district.

We wish to remind districts that long-term studies demonstrate that the concepts of rigor and relevance are not the exclusive responsibility of high schools. Rather rigor and relevance build upon high quality preschool experiences and continue through the education levels beyond high school. Concepts of rigor and relevance are not the exclusive responsibility of our high school educators.

We urge you to engage in local conversations regarding the rigor and relevance afforded your district students.

Sincerely yours,

  
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